

**Department of Human Services
Office of Rehabilitation Services
State Rehabilitation Council**

May 9, 2006

8:30 A.M. – 11:30 P.M.

The Crowne Plaza

(Tiverton Room)

801 Greenwich Ave,

Warwick, RI

Minutes

Present from State Rehabilitation Council: Janice Belasco, Raymond Carroll, Linda Deschenes, Domenic Di Orio, Robin Dolan, Susan Donovan, Judith L. Drew, Joseph Ferreira, Steven A. Florio, Jeannne Giroux, Elizabeth Graves, Margaret Hoye, Anne LeClerc, Gary J. Levine, Lucille Massemينو, Catherine Sansonett, J. David Sienko

Present from Agency: Stephen Brunero, Sharon DiPinto, Mario Olivieri, Virginia Perelson, Erica Saviano

1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS - The Vice-chair called meeting to order at 10:45 A.M.

2. OLD BUSINESS – J. Ferreira

1. Additions or deletions to the Agenda - none

2. Approval of Minutes

Motion

D. Di Orio made a motion seconded by J. Belasco and accepted, with abstentions from J. Drew and S. Florio, to approve the minutes from the March 14, 2006 meeting.

Strategic Planning - D. Sienko

1. Feedback is welcome regarding the orientation so we can better establish a forum for the fall meeting.

2. First Step: finalized schedule completed

3. Second Step: today we have a goal to get us into a meaningful strategic process.

4. Third Step: at the June meeting and into the summer we will start to use our source documents, the State Plan, the Needs Assessment and the Standards and Indicators to establish the SRC work goals. With those three (3) pieces of information, the subcommittees will go through an action phase and in September; we will have an action plan to move forward.

Nomination and Leadership – D. Di Orio

Revisions in Membership Recruitment: the process will be amended to receive new candidates all year and interview them in late summer thus getting them onto the Council just in time for the September orientation.

State Plan and Policy - J. Ferreira

State Plan: the committee needs to meet to review comments to the Plan. A date was established and the committee will report at the next meeting.

3. NEW BUSINESS

J. Ferreira disseminated a story he composed called, 'The Ultimate Battle'. He asked the members and guests to keep the spirit of this work in mind when pursuing the goals of the SRC.

4. ORS DIRECTOR'S REPORT – R. Carroll

- State Budget:** the revenue picture is not that good, so there will be

continuing cuts. Human Services had to bring in a budget that was fifty five (55) million dollars less than last year. Federally, there is a supplemental Bill in Congress sponsoring one hundred and nine (109) billion dollars for funding for the war; unfortunately, none of this money is slated for domestic needs. There is a vast deficit at the Federal level, which will result in cutbacks at the State levels. State Financial Audits are going on right now, and the Budget will be resolved around July.

Discussion regarding ORS funding

Question regarding returning un-used funds to the Federal Government; is ORS still doing this?

Since the banking crisis, ORS has developed third-party cooperative agreements with other vendors and this provides us with State money, in return, ORS provides the vendors with Federal money.

Question: What can the SRC do to help keep the Program funded?

In July, the Governor might propose cutbacks and the Department will then look at the cost benefits. We have good defensible data for our Program. We have tried every possible tactic to get more than the cost of living increases each year. Emails, letters and faxes could all be sent to the Congressional Leadership by individual members of this Council as well as the Council body.

- **Personnel:** the lack of funding may create a hiring freeze.

R. Lebel has just been appointed as the Director of DHS.

ORS is hiring two (2) Rehabilitation Counselors to replace **R. Greene** and **R. Racine**, who both have been promoted.

- **Business Expo:** was held last week. **ORS** had a new exhibit that minimized State Government and maximized the skills we provide.

- **National Business Network:** is being developed by the **CSAVR**. There is a website in development. The hope is to have better out-reach to employers.

A discussion regarding what **ORS** is doing with the local Business Leadership Network (BLN), resulted in a recommendation for the Employment committee to learn more regarding the BLN and **ORS'** association in Rhode Island, and then present this to the membership at a future meeting.

- **State Plan:** **ORS** is amending the Plan rather than re-doing it, since the Rehabilitation Act has not yet been renewed. The changes in the RSA will make the State Plan more of a focal point for **ORS** in the future and under greater scrutiny. Even though the Plan is not due until July, the RSA wanted a draft by May 1, 2006.

- **RSA:** there will be a visit from the RSA from June 5th through June 9th. They will want to speak with members of the Council, the Client

Assistance Program, the State Independent Living Council, and the Governor's Advisory Council for the Blind, as well as visit one of the One Stops. They only plan to visit once every three (3) years instead of every year, as was the former practice.

ORS passed all the Standards and Indicators last year but have not gotten a report back from the Federal Government,

· Worksite Wellness: through S. Brunero's inspiration, the Governor has modeled his wellness program based on our program at ORS. We have taken it very seriously and we have several activities ongoing. Blue Cross and the Providence Chamber of Commerce are giving ORS an award for our efforts.

5. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy L. Baker, Staff

State Rehabilitation Council